

**Fauquier County
Broadband Advisory Committee
Meeting of June 08, 2016**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

Chairman Rick Gerhardt called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. Introduction of Participants

Present were:

Mr. Gerhardt, Mr. Marshall, Ms. Heritage, Mr. Patusky, Mr. Friedman, Mr. Cornwell, Mr. Hopewell, Mr. Ridgell, Mr. Taylor, Ms. Wilkerson, Mr. Faller, Mr. Herstek, Ms. Gaston and Mr. Burke. Mr. Paul Conlin of Blaze Broadband, Ms. Marie Schuler of Comcast and Mr. Andrew Cohill of Design Nine were present as guests. Absent was Mr. Hinkler.

3. Adoption of Agenda and Minutes

Mr. Gerhardt called for a motion to adopt the minutes and agenda. So moved: Mr. Patusky. Seconded: Mr. Cornwell. All in favor.

4. Design Nine Update

Mr. Cohill explained that he has been working with Culpeper and several other Virginia localities on strategic plans for broadband. He indicated that he was looking forward to working with Fauquier County. He indicated that it is a given that people and businesses want all the broadband they can get. Broadband is also a political and land use issue—as it affects the concentration of the population. It is also a very important issue for public education. Part of any strategic plan is looking at available assets and determining gaps. Mr. Gerhardt indicated that he has been attending the meetings in Culpeper with his colleagues from the Path Foundation. Mr. Cohill indicated that many communities have appointed broadband authorities. He noted that County planners should work with developers early to make sure the necessary infrastructure is in place. Some localities have made substantial investments in infrastructure. Some have obtained state, federal and foundation grants. Mr. Cohill indicated that each community must identify its broader economic goals to determine what metrics to use to measure the success of broadband. Mr. Cornwell agreed that these goals must be identified and addressed in a planned fashion and political cohesion at the top is required. Mr. Friedman added that the current economic focus includes expanding and growing existing businesses, having vital infrastructure in place and concentrating development in the service districts. In more rural areas, broadband is needed for education, telecommuting and home-based businesses. Mr. Gerhardt indicated that the lack of viable broadband contributes greatly to commuting and traffic congestion. Ms. Gaston indicated that lack of broadband has an

impact on private home sales and the prices paid. She offered to share any data points that she could identify from the Greater Piedmont Area Association of Realtors. Mr. Ridgell noted that communities with good broadband access enjoy a generational advantage. Ms. Heritage indicated that she would schedule a meeting with Mr. Gerhardt, Mr. Cohill, Mr. Friedman and herself to begin the strategic planning process.

5. Comcast Update

Mr. Ridgell asked Ms. Schuler what Comcast planned to do about the “dead zones” between served areas. Ms. Schuler indicated that Comcast was willing to extend anywhere people were willing to pay for the service. She indicated that Comcast is a business with a business model and not a public utility. She indicated that the cost of running one mile of cable is approximately \$55,000—a blended cost of both aerial and underground. Mr. Patusky requested an estimate to run cable up Route 50 from Middleburg to Upperville. Mr. Gerhardt indicated that this was the type of information that he was hoping to glean from the strategic plan. Mr. Ridgell asked Ms. Schuler for a growth plan from Comcast describing what locations, if any, they could begin to fill in on their coverage map. The committee briefly viewed a Comcast coverage map, but was not provided with one to keep.

6. Milestone Update

Ms. Heritage discussed Milestone, Inc., a company which specializes in using public space (schools, parks, utilities) as a venue for providers’ equipment in an effort to maximize the aesthetic potential. Milestone operates on a cost-share basis with the owner/lessor. She indicated that Milestone had recently met with the Schools’ Facilities Committee and is meeting this month with the full School Board.

7. Tasking

- Ms. Heritage will schedule a meeting with Mr. Gerhardt, Mr. Cohill, Mr. Friedman and herself to begin the strategic planning process.

8. Next Meeting and Adjourn

Hearing no further business, Mr. Gerhardt adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 13, 2016 at the Warren Green Building.

Given under my hand this 9th day of June, 2016

Catherine M. Heritage, Deputy County Administrator

